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#13
MOONSTONE™
$3.50

THE PHANTOM™

Mike Bullock
Carlos Magno

THE PHANTOM

created by LEE FALK

"TIGER'S BLOOD" PART TWO

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ILLUSTRATED BY *CARLOS MAGNO*
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SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PHANTOM CONSULTANT
ED RHOADES

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Nearly five centuries ago, during a daring raid at sea, pirates took the life of merchant ship captain Christopher Standish, ex-cabin boy of Christopher Columbus. In the heart of the pitched battle aboard the ship, Standish's son was knocked overboard to wash ashore on a remote beach where he was befriended by the legendary pygmy tribe, The Bandar.
After stumbling upon the body of his father's killer, young Standish swore an oath on the murderer's skull to devote his life, and the lives of his sons, to the destruction of piracy, greed, cruelty, and injustice.
Generation after generation, young Standish's blood line fought evil to their dying breath.
To the outside world, there has been only one, seemingly immortal, who has worn the mask.
As the legend grew, it transcended the life of any one man. And that legend became...
THE PHANTOM
PRESENT TIME.
I HAVE WAITED SO VERY LONG FOR THIS DAY...
...EVER SINCE YOU TOOK MY MARIA FROM ME I'VE HUNGERED FOR MY REVENGE.

FIVE YEARS AGO.
I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GOING TO MARRY THE INTERNATIONAL KICK BOXING CHAMPION!
I'M SO PROUD OF YOU, MANUEL ORTEGA.
AND I AM SO PROUD TO BE MARRYING A POLITICAL ACTIVIST, MARIA. WITH YOU KEEPING THE POLITICIANS IN LINE, OUR LIVES WILL NEVER BE DULL, THAT'S FOR SURE.
HOW IS YOUR LATEST ASSIGNMENT COMING ALONG?
...
WHAT'S WRONG, MY LOVE?
ARTHUR, MY BOSS, HAS SHOWN ME HOW OUR LOCAL PUPPET GOVERNMENTS MISTREAT THEIR CITIZENS. THEY THINK THEY CAN TREAD ON THEM, WHILE THE LEADERS LIVE LIKE KINGS AND THE UNITED NATIONS DOES NOTHING.
CHILDREN STARVE, MOTHERS FIGHT DISEASE AND FATHERS ARE CONSCRIPTED TO FIGHT IN UNJUST WARS ALL SO THAT THESE EVIL MEN CAN REVEL IN THEIR DECADENCE.
LOOK! IT'S JUST AS I SAID!

ARTHUR TOLD ME THE PHANTOM IS JUST A PAWN OF BANGALLA'S CORRUPT GOVERNMENT!
LOOK HOW HE BEATS THESE POOR MEN INTO SUBMISSION!
"LIBERTY"? CALL ME CRAZY, BUT I NEVER CONSIDERED THE DEATH OF INNOCENTS LIBERATING.
YOU CANNOT STOP OUR FIGHT FOR LIBERTY, PURPLE MAN!
YOU CAN NO LONGER OPPRESS US, INFIDEL! WE SHALL WIPE YOUR STAIN FROM THIS LAND!
NOW DIE!

BOOM
-:COUGH:-
MARIA...
IT LOOKS LIKE YOUR ARM MIGHT BE BROKEN--WE'LL HAVE TO GET YOU SOME MEDICAL ATTENTION.
BLESS YOU, GHOST WHO WALKS.

MARIA!
NOOOOO!
MANUEL, MY BROTHER! WHAT HAPPENED?! IS MARIA ALL RIGHT?
MIGUEL, CHECK HER PULSE!
MÃE DO DEUS!
SHE IS DEAD, CARLOS...
NOOOO!

TWO DAYS AGO.
THE JUNGLE. MY HOME...
...TURNED AGAINST ME...
G-GURAN!
YOU HAVE SHAMED YOUR ANCESTORS, GHOST WHO WALKS. YOU HAVE FAILED THEM.
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING...

DIANA, MY LOVE...
NO!
NO, SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.
IT IS TIME FOR THE "MAN WHO CANNOT DIE" TO TASTE THE SWEET NECTAR OF HIS OWN DEATH!
GURAN, DIANA, THEY'D NEVER TURN ON ME LIKE THIS...
WH-WHERE AM I?

NOW.
WHERE AM I? What is this place?
WE'RE GOING TO NEED MORE TIGERS SOON. HAS MR. BLACKWOOD GOTTEN MIGUEL AND CARLOS OUT OF JAIL YET?
NOT YET, BUT DON'T WORRY. MANUEL GAVE PHANTOM ENOUGH MANIC TO KNOCK AN ELEPHANT OUT FOR A WEEK.
HE WON'T BE COMING AROUND FOR AWHILE.
THAT'S THE HIGHEST DOSE MANUEL'S EVER GIVEN ANYONE. THIS POOR BASTARD'S BRAIN MUST BE SWIMMING IN NIGHT TERRORS.
HE'LL NEVER RECOVER FROM THE NIGHTMARE HIS MIND IS IMAGINING.

I think my shoulder is dislocated... luckily, this drug is dulling the pain enough for me to do that.
What is this place? And more importantly, why is ADE there as well?
WOW, this "Game" must not have completely worn off.
Oh-oh. Here we go again, how'd I get here, anyway?

THREE DAYS AGO.
MRREE-OWWWW
OVER THERE, HERO. THAT SOUNDS LIKE ONE OF THE ORPHANED TIGER CUBS. THE CRY IS COMING FROM THAT CAVE.
MRRRRRR
This MIGHT be the lair of those tiger poachers. I'd heard speculation they're set up a base of operations in

WELL, WELL. ARE THE POACHERS KEEPING *PETS* NOW?
HISSSS
WELL, *THAT'S* NO WAY TO TREAT YOUR--
KRAK
LET ME GUESS, YOU *MUST* BE THE *BAD GUY*?

WHAMM
ONE SUCKER SHOT IS ALL YOU GET.
UHN!
IT'S A LITTLE TOO LATE TO TAKE THE HIGH ROAD, MY FRIEND.
YOU TOOK HER FROM ME. AND FOR THAT, YOU SHALL PAY, PHANTOM!
I HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, PAL, I'M NOT IN THE BUSINESS OF "TAKING" PEOPLE.
LIAR!

ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT THINKING ABOUT SOME OTHER GUY IN A PURPLE SUIT?
JOKE ALL YOU WANT, PHANTOM, BUT I SAW YOU WITH MY OWN EYES! DOING THEIR BIDDING, LIKE THE PAWN THAT YOU ARE!
AND NOW, YOU SHALL FEEL MY PAIN!
AAAH--!
K-RACK
THAT ISN'T ORDINARY DUST YOU'RE BREATHING, PHANTOM.

IT'S CALLED "MANIC" AND I MADE IT JUST FOR YOU...
OR DID YOU THINK I'D JUST STAND BY AND LET YOU CONTINUE TO RUIN MY LIFE?
THE DEATH OF MY MARIA IS ON YOUR HANDS, PHANTOM. HER BLOOD STREAMS THROUGH YOUR FINGERS EVERY DAY YOU WALK THIS EARTH.
I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT FIGURE IT ALL OUT WHEN YOU CAPTURED MY BROTHERS, CARLOS AND MIGUEL, WITH THEIR IDIOT FRIEND JAVIER.
BUT YOUR ARROGANCE BLINDED YOU TO THE BIG PICTURE.
WHOMP
IT'S TOO BAD, REALLY. I THOUGHT YOU'D BE MUCH MORE CHALLENGING.
"GHOST WHO WALKS"... PFFFT!
NOW YOU'LL BE REMEMBERED AS THE "GHOST WHO DIED!"

NOW.
WE BETTER HURRY UP-- MANUEL WILL BE BACK SOO--
URK!
THAT TAKES CARE OF THE CRONIES, NOW WHERE'S EL JEFE?
LOOKS LIKE MR. WIZARD HAS COME TO THE JUNGLE. I WONDER WHERE HE RAN OFF TO...

UUH
MANUEL, I PRESUME?
THANKS FOR POPPING MY SHOULDER BACK IN PLACE. IT'LL MAKE IT MUCH EASIER TO BRING YOU DOWN.
I DOSED YOU WITH ENOUGH MANIC TO KEEP YOU ENTRENCHED IN YOUR NIGHTMARES FOR ANOTHER WEEK! IT'S AMAZING THAT YOU'VE OVERCOME THE DRUG SO QUICKLY.
MAYBE A VAPORIZED FORM WILL HAVE A STRONGER EFFECT ON YOU.
I GUESS YOU'RE GOING TO SLEEPY TOWN WITH ME?
OH NO, PHANTOM, I'VE METABOLIZED THE ANTIDOTE. THE ONLY NIGHTMARES WILL BE YOURS.

HERE'S A LIFE LESSON FOR YOU: IT'S HARD TO SCARE A MAN WHO HAS NO FEAR.
MWA-HAHAHA!
YOU'VE BEEN SO EASY TO MANIPULATE, PHANTOM!
HOW SO?
WE KNEW YOU'D COME LOOKING FOR US ONCE MY BROTHERS STARTED POACHING THOSE TIGERS.
KRUNCH
BUT YOU HAD NO IDEA WE WERE USING THE PHEROMONES FROM THOSE ANIMALS TO SYNTHESIZE YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE!
DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD HIT ANYTHING IN YOUR CURRENT STATE, PHANTOM?

WHILE AT UNIVERSITY, ONE OF MY PROFESSORS THEORIZED THAT TIGERS AND OTHER LARGE CARNIVORES EXUDED PHEROMONES TO STRIKE FEAR IN THEIR PREY.
LUCKY FOR YOU, I'VE MANAGED TO CREATE AN ARTIFICIAL STIMULANT THAT SEEMS TO BEAR THE SAME RESULTS.
THIS VERY PRODUCT IS WHAT'S TURNED YOU INTO A QUIVERING CHILD--
--GRIPPED IN THE ANXIETY AND TERROR CREATED BY YOUR OWN IMAGINATION.
WHOOF
YOU MUST HAVE ME MISTAKEN FOR SOMEONE ELSE.
IF YOU'RE NOT AFRAID, THEN WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO ESCAPE, MY LITTLE GUINEA PIG? YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM YOUR OWN WORST FEARS!
OH, I WOULDN'T THINK OF LEAVING THE PARTY EARLY. I JUST NEEDED SOME FRESH AIR, AND SOME OF THE FUMES FROM THE ANTIDOTE, TO CLEAR MY THOUGHTS.
YOU DO HAVE THE STRENGTH OF TEN TIGERS, DON'T YOU?

THAT'S WHAT FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF VITAMINS AND EXERCISE CAN DO FOR YOU.
FOUR HUNDRED YEARS? I FORGOT YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE IMMORTAL.
LET'S SEE IF IMMORTALITY COMES WITH IMMUNITY.
YOU DON'T LOOK SO IMMORTAL TO ME NOW, PHANTOM.

THEN BY ALL MEANS, TAKE A CLOSER LOOK.
KRASSH!!

THOSE MEN WILL BURN TO DEATH IN THERE!
EVEN BAD GUYS DESERVE A GOOD RESCUE.
YOU TOOK A PRETTY STRONG DOSE OF THAT DRUG, BUT LUCKILY FOR YOU, YOU ALSO LAID IN A CLOUD OF THE ANTIDOTE VAPOR FOR A BIT.
AS FOR MANUEL, I COULDN'T FIND HIS BODY--
JUST BE HAPPY I SAVED YOUR LIVES. THAT THOUGHT SHOULD KEEP YOU WARM AT NIGHT IN JAIL.
WH-WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE'S MANUEL?

"WE INTERRUPT TONIGHT'S HIT TRACKS DANCE MIX WITH A SPECIAL NEWS UPDATE: THE MEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RECENT RASH OF POACHING, STEMMING FROM A DEMAND FOR THE NEW DRUG, CUPID, HAVE BEEN APPREHENDED BY THE JUNGLE PATROL, AFTER THEIR PROCESSING LAB WAS DISCOVERED AND DESTROYED IN A DARING LATE NIGHT RAID.
THE RING LEADER APPEARS TO HAVE DIED AT THE SCENE, THE VICTIM OF A CHEMICAL FIRE SPARKED BY AN UNKNOWN CAUSE."
"AND NOW WE'LL SEND YOU BACK TO PARTY NIGHT'S HIT TRACKS DANCE MIX! LET'S PARTY!"
THE PARTY ISN'T OVER YET, PHANTOM, NOT BY *ANY* STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION.

Behind the Mask

The Phantom's Skull Ring

When I was a pre school age kid, I couldn't wait to sit on my dad's knee while he read the Phantom newspaper strip to me each day. I was enthralled by this strange character and his skull motif. Even today, I recall how cool I thought his skull ring was. He punched the bad guys and they carried its imprint forever. Whenever he wanted to scare someone, he would leave the 'death's head' mark on a glass they were about to use, on a desk, or even as his signature on a short note.

Just how the ring worked was a mystery and a matter of conjecture.

For his interview on the A&E Biography, Lee said it was a secret. In the US Charlton comic series, it was explained as a mysterious jungle dye. On the cover of Avon paperback #2, the painting by the late George Wilson seems to show a scarring from the ring, and the Paramount film made the ring have magical properties.

Since Phantom creator Lee Falk wrote copy for a radio station in St. Louis that featured adventures of the Spider who burned a spider mark on the faces of the dispatched villains, it would seem his idea was influenced by this earlier pulp hero. However, Lee never gave an explanation for just how the ring worked.

Each artist presented their own interpretations of the appearance of the ring. Ray Moore's earliest illustration showed the ring to be similar to the Phantom's belt buckle which gave the skull a striped triangle for a background. The next Phantom artist, Wilson McCoy, had a skull ring made for himself and used a simple skull with no background as did the ring worn by Tom Tyler in the 1943 Columbia movie serial, "The Phantom."

When legendary Phantom artist Sy Barry began drawing the strip in 1961, he updated the design. Sy felt the ring should look more practical for leaving the famous image, so he drew a ring that was basically a flat rectangle with a raised skull mark. A very similar ring was licensed by Planet Studios, and I had the honor of modeling it along with their goodmark ring for the close-ups used in the A&E Phantom Biography.

In 1996, the Paramount film introduced a new concept…a heavy silver antique ring with supernatural properties. Instead of tattooing the victim's face with a jungle dye, the ring somehow molded the villains flesh to show a three dimensional scar shaped like a 'death's head,' a term Falk used in the strip to describe the ring. With a little help from the producers of Zane's costume, Hensen's Creature Studios, Friends of the Phantom were able to present penciler George Olesen and inker Keith Williams with exact replicas of Billy Zane's ring, and soon afterward, the strip sported an exciting new look with a panel inspired by the 'slam evil' movie posters.

The current Sunday strip artist, Graham Nolan's rendering of the skull and goodmark rings is based on his Planet Studios ring set which has each symbol raised in a circle. "I always thought the Phantom's mark was a scar…you punch a guy and you scar him for life." Graham explains, "The goodmark I figured it had to be some kind of dye, because he's not going to inflict pain."

The skull ring has been interpreted various ways throughout the years in Phantom comics, in both US and foreign versions. The latest version is shown on Doug Klauba's beautifully painted cover for Moonstone issue #4 in a dramatic presentation.

-Ed Rhoades